

# ABSTRACT

A comparator for use with a time-temperature indicator wherein the time-temperature indicator includes an active portion having an initial color and which undergoes chemical changes as time elapses and at a rate related to the temperature of the surrounding environment and wherein the chemical changes produce changes in the color of the active portion. The comparator comprises a substantially planar support member, and a plurality of comparator stages located on the support member. Each comparator stage comprises a first portion having a reference color and a second portion having a predetermined color that is the same as one of the colors to which the active portion of the time-temperature indicator changes. The predetermined colors of the second portions of the comparator stages darken in a progressive manner such that the predetermined color of the second portion of a first one of the comparator stages is substantially lighter than the reference color of the first stage and the predetermined color of the second portion of a last one of the comparator stages is substantially darker than the reference color of the last comparator stage. A user of the comparator compares the color of the active portion of the time-temperature indicator to each comparator stage to determine if the color of the active portion is the same as the predetermined color of the second portion of any of the comparator stages.